

# IS IT MY FAULT?

HOPE AND HEALING FOR THOSE SUFFERING  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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**MOODY PUBLISHERS**  
CHICAGO

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Edited by Stephanie S. Smith of (In)dialogue Communications  
Interior design: Ragont Design  
Cover Design: Faceout Studio  
Cover Image: Shutterstock #4828659  
Author photo: Kim Bogardus

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ISBN: 978-0-8024-1024-5

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Chicago, IL 60610

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

*Printed in the United States of America*

## Appendix 2

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# Making a Safety Plan<sup>1</sup>

If you are experiencing physical, sexual, emotional, and/or verbal abuse from a partner, spouse, family member, etc., you can create a personalized safety plan.

A personalized safety plan will help you know what to do if/when you decide to leave or find yourself (and children) in an emergency.

You can create this safety plan even if you are not ready to leave.

There are some important things that need to be considered. Evidence shows that planning before leaving is really important and is more likely to help the women stay away.

Please ensure that safety is considered when creating, printing, and/or completing this document. Considering who will have access to it and where it will be stored are extremely important.

### SAFETY DURING A VIOLENT INCIDENT

In order to increase safety during a violent incident, you may use a variety of strategies. Here are some strategies for you to consider.

I can use the following options:

1. What are the possible escape route(s) from my home? What doors, windows, elevators, stairwells, or fire escapes could I use? I will take the time to practice how to get out safely.

- 
2. I can keep my purse/wallet and keys handy, and always keep them in the same place (\_\_\_\_\_), so that I can

locate them easily if I need to leave in a hurry. I can also have a second set of keys made in case my partner/ex takes the first set.

3. I can keep a bag ready and put it \_\_\_\_\_  
so I can leave quickly.
4. If it is safe for me, I could tell the following people about the violence and request that they call the police if they suspect I am in danger: \_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Children's safety in abuse situations is central to a safety plan. I may be able to teach my children a safety plan specifically for them in these circumstances. I can teach my children to use the telephone to call the police and the fire department.
6. It may be helpful to have a code word to use with my children, other family members, or friends if I should need them to call for help. I will use this word code: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
7. Safe places that I can go if I need to leave my home. Be prepared even if you think you will never have to leave.
  - A place to use the phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - A place I could stay for a couple of hours: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - A place that I could stay for a couple of days: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - I can teach these strategies to my children.
8. When an abusive incidence occurs, I will move to a safer room. During an abusive incident, it is best to try to avoid places in the

house where I may be trapped or where weapons are readily available such as the bathroom or kitchen. Bigger rooms with more than one exit may be safer.

9. The places I would try to avoid would be: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. The places I would try to move to/stay in are: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. In abusive situations, women sometimes say or do things that in an equal non-abusive relationship they would not. For some women this involves survival skills such as claiming to agree with the abuser even when it's not true in order to increase safety. On other occasions, women may retaliate against the abuser with violence; however, be aware that such actions could lead you to be charged with a criminal offense.

12. Calling the police.

13. Given my past experience, other protective actions that I have considered or employed are: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **SAFETY PLANNING IF YOU ARE GETTING READY TO LEAVE**

Some women leave the residence they share with the abusive partner. These are protective actions you may wish to consider if you are in this situation. Even if you are not planning to leave your partner, it is important to review a safety plan regarding leaving in case the violence escalates and you need to leave quickly.

I can use the following strategies:

1. It may not be safe to inform my partner that I am leaving.
  
2. Should I need to leave quickly, it would be helpful for me to leave some extra cash, an extra set of house and car keys and extra clothes with some people who I can go to for help:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ and  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. I can keep copies of important documents such as immigration papers or birth certificates at someone's house: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. I can open a savings account to increase my freedom to leave. I should make sure to alert the bank not to send any correspondence to my home address.
  
5. Other things I can do to increase my independence are: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_.
  
6. The domestic violence hotline is \_\_\_\_\_.  
 I can seek safe shelter and support by calling this help line.
  
7. Telephone numbers I need to know:  
 For safety reasons it may be necessary to keep these telephone numbers hidden but accessible!) and/or memorize the numbers:  
 Police Department: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Domestic Abuse Help Line (24 hours): \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Solicitor: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Religious Leader (Minister/Rabbi/Priest/Imam): \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

8. I can get legal advice from a victim advocate who understands domestic abuse. But as with the bank, I should make certain the advocate knows not to send any correspondence to my home address. It is critical to consult with a family advocate if you have children. Your local domestic abuse service may be able to recommend a suitable legal advocate.

9. I must be careful if I am using my mobile or home number because my partner or ex could see the numbers I have called on next month's telephone bill. I can keep telephone calls confidential by using a pay phone, a prepaid phone card, pay-as-you-go mobile phone, a friend's telephone card, or calling collect.

10. These are people that I could ask for assistance with:

Money: \_\_\_\_\_

Child care: \_\_\_\_\_

Support-attending appointments: \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

11. If I need to return home to get personal belongings, I can call the police for an escort to stand by and keep the peace. To do this, I call \_\_\_\_\_ (the nonemergency local police number) and ask the police to meet me somewhere close to my home. They will stay while I pick up my own and my children's personal belongings.
  
12. I will review my safety plan every \_\_\_\_\_ (time frame) in order to plan the safest route. I will review the plan with \_\_\_\_\_ (a friend, counselor, or advocate).
  
13. I will rehearse the escape plan and practice it with my children.
  
14. When you leave an abusive partner, it is important to take certain items with you. Items with asterisks on the following list are the most important, but if there is time, the other items might be taken, or stored outside the cTJF0.21me, ttdF[(-4(\*F[(ad)4(tt)125uF1.4995u



House lease/mortgage/insurance documents\*  
Address book\*  
Pictures/photos  
Children's favorite toys/blankets  
Jewelry  
Items of special sentimental value

15. Other protective actions I have considered are:

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### SAFETY IN YOUR OWN HOME

The following are some suggestions regarding safety measures in your own home that you may wish to consider (some of these safety measures cost money).

I can use the following safety methods:

1. If financially possible, I could:
  - Change the locks on my doors and windows as soon as possible. (You may need to inform the landlord if you are renting or legal advocate if you own your home before taking this action.)
  - Install a peephole in the door.
  - Replace wooden doors with steel doors.
  - Install security systems—i.e., additional locks, window bars, poles to wedge against doors, electronic alarm system, etc.
  - Purchase rope ladders to be used for escape routes from the second floor.
  - Install smoke detectors and buy fire extinguishers for each floor of my home.

- Install a motion sensitive lighting system outside that lights up when a person is coming close to my home.
  - Leave the lights on at night and when I am away from home.
2. If I have custody, I can inform all the people who provide child care for my children about who has permission to pick up my children and who does not. I can give these people copies of the custody order to keep with them and a picture of the abusive partner. I will tell the people who care for my children, who have permission to pick up my children. The people I will inform about pickup permission include:

School \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Nursery/Day Care staff \_\_\_\_\_

Before/After-School care \_\_\_\_\_

Babysitter \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday School \_\_\_\_\_

Relatives \_\_\_\_\_

Others \_\_\_\_\_

3. I can teach my children how to use the phone to make collect calls to me and to \_\_\_\_\_ (friend, family, minister) if my partner tries to take them.

4. I can tell my the following people that my partner no longer lives with me and ask that they should call the police if he is seen near my residence:

Neighbors \_\_\_\_\_

Landlord \_\_\_\_\_

Church Leaders \_\_\_\_\_

Friends \_\_\_\_\_

Others \_\_\_\_\_

5. Other strategies that I am already using or that I might use include:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### SAFETY AT WORK AND IN PUBLIC

Each woman must decide if and/or when she will tell others that her partner has abused her and that she may be at continued risk. Friends, family, and coworkers may be able to help protect women. Each woman should consider carefully which people to recruit to help secure her safety. I might do any or all of the following:

1. If it is comfortable to do so, I can tell my boss, security, and \_\_\_\_\_ at work about this situation.
2. According to how comfortable and safe I feel, I can ask \_\_\_\_\_ to help screen my phone calls.
3. If it is comfortable to do so, and I feel it would be supportive to me and my situation, I could discuss the possibility of having my employer call the police if I am in danger from my partner or ex.
4. Some safety suggestions regarding arriving or leaving work:
  - Let someone know when you'll be home
  - Walk with someone to your car
  - Scan the parking lot
  - If your partner is following you, drive to a place where there are people to support you, e.g., a friend's home, police station
  - If you are walking, take a route that is populated
  - Take different routes home

- If you see your partner on the street, try to get to a public place
  - You can also call attention to yourself and request help
  - Purchase a personal alarm device
5. When I am driving home from work and problems arise, I can
- 
6. I can use different supermarkets/shopping centers and shop at different times than I did before to reduce the risk of contact with my partner or ex.

### **SAFETY AND DRUG OR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION**

Alcohol and/or drugs are sometimes used as coping mechanisms for victims of domestic violence. The disclosure of the use of illegal/legal drugs can put a woman at a disadvantage in legal actions with her abusive partner. Therefore, women should carefully consider the potential cost of the use of legal and/or illegal drugs. Beyond this, the use of any alcohol or other drugs can reduce a woman's awareness and ability to act quickly to protect herself from the abusive partner. Furthermore, the use of alcohol or other drugs by the abuser may be used as an excuse for violence.

### **SAFETY AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH**

Being subjected to abuse by partners is usually exhausting and emotionally draining. The process of surviving requires much courage and incredible energy. To conserve my emotional energy and resources and to support myself in hard emotional times, I can do some of the following:

1. If I have left the relationship and I am experiencing loneliness or manipulative tactics from my abusive partner, I can take care of myself by: \_\_\_\_\_

- 
2. If I feel sad, lonely, or depressed and desire to return to a potentially violent situation/partner, I can \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ and I can call \_\_\_\_\_
  
  3. When I have to talk to my partner in person or on the phone, I can emotionally prepare by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
  4. I can remind myself “ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ ” if I feel people are trying to control or abuse me.
  
  5. When I face potentially difficult times like court cases, meetings with lawyers, and such, I can prepare by doing the following \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
  6. I can call the following people and/or places for support:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
  7. Things I can do to make me feel stronger are \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
  8. I can find out about and attend workshops and support groups in the community by calling my local domestic abuse service on:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_